

VERSES

HERBERT KENNEDY



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So mum
with best love
from Jack.



1911.

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VERSES



VERSES

BY

HERBERT KENNEDY

A. C. CURTIS
GUILDFORD
MDCCCCXI

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PREFACE

HERBERT LENNARD GOODRICH KENNEDY died at Charterhouse, November 7, 1910. Although he was only eighteen, he had for several years been writing verses, of which even the earliest showed a mind of rare quality.

The poems in this volume are the work of his last two years and have been collected by the Charterhouse Poetry Society in remembrance of a loved friend and a true poet.

With one or two exceptions, we give them here in the order in which they were written.

CHARTERHOUSE, 1911.

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THE FLOWER OF LOVE.

APRIL, 1909.

Love is the pale pure blossom white that blows
In this world's tangled garden, herb divine
That in high Heaven with holy radiance glows,
Shedding pure fragrance round the throne of
God;

Ne'er gathered save on angels' breasts to shine,
From their bright hands down fall'n, whene'er
they trod

The starry depths and viewed the loveless lands
Of this sad world. And so the floweret grows,
Soft-shadowed by the whiteness of their wings,
And nurtured tenderly by heavenly hands
To be the comfort and the balm of things—
Strong to wake hope within the hearts of those
Who seek to find throughout their fleeting hour
Light 'mid the darkness of Life's stormy sea,
Yet seek in vain, until one little flower
Smiles upward on their sad souls gloriously—
Blessed, by that Heaven from which all sweet-
ness flows,

With immortality;

For if the world lies not—true love is Heaven,
And Heaven can never die.

A TREE IN WINTER.

1909.

Old tree, the snowqueen passed thee in the night
 And thrilled thee with the magic of her hand ;
 For now at dawn thy trembling arms rise white
 Above a world new-turned to fairyland.

The gleaming fretwork of the frosted leaves
 Stretches a silver web from bough to bough ;
 Bright threads the snow-sprite's shining shuttle
 weaves,
 White-hung by fairy fingers high and low.

Perchance, bowed down beneath thy load of snow,
 Unconscious of thy beauty, thou hast dreams
 Of summer, and hast sighed for winds that blow
 More softly and the song of sunlit streams.

Old friend, thou would'st not sigh could'st thou
 but guess
 That to one heart at least thy beauty now
 Hath brought more joy of perfect loveliness
 Than e'er it did in summer's golden glow.

Perchance when thou hast kissed the lips of
Spring,

And in thine arms the blossom slowly swells
To sunlit life, some hidden thought may bring
A far off memory in thy heart that dwells :—
And mingled with the thrush's song shall ring
The clear cold music of the Christmas bells.

PULVIS ET UMBRA SUMUS.

1909.

We are but dust and shadow, we who dwell
Within this world of changing dust and shade;
And comes the question—Wherefore were we
made?

Wherefore was it created? who can tell?

Something there is to do. 'Twas not for nought
God breathed into this dust the light of life;
Some perfect peace to follow after strife;
Some joy e'en though by bitter anguish bought.

Some strength to strive and conquer in the fight;
Some far off glory after triumph won;
Some flash of angel wings to guide us on,
Yearning through darkness upward to the light.

May it be ours to open wide the door
Of pity, and to others' hopes and fears
Bear comfort sweet; and in a vale of tears
To leave some joy where sorrow reigned before.

May it be ours to soothe the couch of pain ;
To give some little gladness every day
To all our brothers on life's hard highway,
For surely so we have not lived in vain ;

To face in radiant scorn a world of lies ;
Passing unstained of heart and pure of soul,
On, ever onward to the promised goal ;
To turn bright faces upward to the skies.

With eyes far fixed upon the distant crown,
Girt in the power of truth without, within,
Cleave a white pathway through the mists of sin,
And with strong arm to strike the tempter down.

That we, though others fail, may stand alone,
The steadfast banner of our faith unfurled ;
To send some flash of light across the world,
Ere we pass back into the Great unknown.

DAFFODILS.

APRIL, 1909.

Blow, blow your golden trumpets,
Ye dancing daffodils !
Blow, blow your golden trumpets !
For Spring is on the hills.

High on the hills she gleameth,
Dancing with fairy feet,
While the waiting world low dreameth
Of the touch of her fingers sweet ;

Of the sound of a voice whose gladness
Only the flowers can know,
Awaked from the gloom and sadness
Of Winter's frost and snow ;

Of a flower-sweet face that gazeth
Bright o'er the dreaming earth ;
Of a tender hand that raiseth
From death to a brighter birth.

O ring it o'er the meadow,
In sunshine and in shadow,
O ring it out, ye golden bells,
The end of Winter's reign !
O ring it to the flowers
And the sunlight and the showers ;
O ring it out across the world
That Spring has come again.

Blow, blow your golden trumpets,
Ye dancing daffodils !
Blow, blow your golden trumpets !
For Spring has left the hills.

Low in the vale she lingers,
And all her path along
The touch of her magic fingers
Thrills all to life and song.

Pure at her breast there shineth
The snowdrop's radiance fair ;
The primrose her feet entwineth,
The violet laughs in her hair.

The hawthorn buds are paling
As snow-white flowers unfold ;
The berberis is trailing
Its glowing arms of gold.

The lily bells are ringing,
The tulips burst apart,
And a nightingale is singing
In the cherry blossom's heart.

Faint pansies lowly smile, and higher
The purple lilacs glow ;
Laburnums droop their golden fire
To kiss the earth below.

The almond flings its rosy showers
 Above the western wall.
 Oh all the world's a field of flowers
 And thou art queen of all,
 My love,
 And thou art queen of all !

Oh earth below and Heaven above
 Are decked in April's sheen,
 For all the world's a world of love,
 And thou art April's queen,
 My love,
 And thou art April's queen !

O ring it to the valleys
 And the hawthorn scented alleys ;
 O ring it out ye golden bells
 In sunshine or in rain ;
 O ring it out ye daffodils,
 Ye dainty, dancing daffodils ;
 O ring it out across the world
 That Spring has come again.

AN AUTUMN STORM.

AUGUST, 1908.

Far away,

Like the first faint strain of music from a song of
long ago,

Which in my heart awaketh suddenly,
Stirred to new life by some sweet memory
Of a long past and long forgotten day,
Soft-sighing through the boughs the wind doth
blow.

Murmuring,

Soft, soft through the rustling tree-tops where
asleep lie the moonbeams bright,

As when 'midst orange blossom's golden glow
Slow stealing 'neath the stars it whispers low
In the glad ears of lovers, wandering
Through the still beauty of a Southern night.

Gone is the whisper ; and there seems to be
A deathly stillness over all the world ;
Then distant murmurs, as of breakers hurled
Swift shorewards by the ever restless sea.

Nearer and swifter now the storm-winds blow,
And loud in sullen anger roar the waves
Filling with hollow crash the echoing caves,
White-foaming on the rugged rocks below.

Ever louder, ever nearer, whirling all things from
 its path,
 Ever swifter rolling onwards in the tempest of its
 wrath,
 With an ever deepening murmur, on it rushes
 from afar,
 Like the tramp of armed thousands meeting in
 the clash of war.
 And the strains of spirit music 'mid the rolling
 tumult play,
 Sweetly rising, sweetly falling, as it sweepeth on
 its way.
 'Tis here : and the air is filled with the sound of
 its battle-song,
 As it rolleth on triumphant the moonlit fields
 along,
 And the waving grasses quiver and bend 'neath
 the icy blast,
 And the dying leaves of Autumn from the boughs
 fall thick and fast.
 The human voice may stay not, no human hand
 may bind ;
 Away ! away ! O wild and free ! Roll on, roll
 on, O wind !
 Thou art the voice of the groaning of earth in her
 anguish :
 Thou art the sweep of the wings of the angels of
 night :
 Thou art the spirit of infinite, desolate sadness :
 Thou art the breath of the whisper of God in His
 might.

Nought on the shrinking earth thy passage bars,
 Who scorn'st the puny might of men and kings,
 Now wailing love songs to the shivering stars,
 Now flashing earthward borne on eagle's wings.

And the dead leaves fly before thee

And the nodding trees adore thee

As thou sweepst on thy way through the night.

Thus for a moment, then again

Thou risest to the darkening height

Of Heaven, 'mid the coming rain

That hisses threatening in thy wake,

And all at once the howling storm doth break

Upon the trembling world, and up on high

Thou shrillest forth thy song of victory,

As merciless thou lashest down

The stinging drops upon the shivering leaves,

Which parched and brown

Are stricken from the dripping boughs and fall

Slow fluttering to the ground and fading die;

And over them the earth, rain-watered, weaves

Of clinging mud a melancholy pall,

As though it would have said

That summer now is dead

And winter nigh.

Then tiring of thy sport,

Swifter than thought,

Beneath thy wings the clouds thou gatherest

Soft pillowed on thy swelling breast,

And bear'st them swift away, and fainter now
The echo of thy voice moans dismally
Afar, as on thy way thou fliest,
Like some lost soul in utterest agony.
Then of a sudden softer doth it grow
And filled with wondrous music, e'en as though
The angels to the dying stars did play,
Which fading, ever fading, slowly dieth
In the distance away.

GOLDEN DAYS.

1909.

Men say that our love is but madness,
And life but a vale of tears,
Yet hours there are whose gladness
Shines bright amid hopes and fears,
Starlike through a mist of sadness
On the breast of the flying years.

Days when the heart of the world is beating with
joy unbidden and un beholden,
When the voice of gladness awakes and shrilleth
to fling wide arms to the wondrous sky,
When filled is the rose of our life with fragrance,
and earth seems air and the air seems golden,
And man's wild heart in its prison beateth, and
singeth of glory, it knows not why.

Morn of peace, when the soul is hushed at the
birth of day, and the red dawn breaketh;
Hours of storm and of thunder echo as the shriek-
ing sea-wave smites the land;
Calm of even when God is nearest—each in turn in
our hearts awaketh
An infinite yearning for far off things that we
scarce can understand.

Wondrous nights when the world's white beauty
sinks on the soul with the scent of flowers,
Stars that tremble and winds that wander, nightin-
gales on the hawthorn spray

Thrilling afar, from the perfumed mist of the
faintly shimmering silver showers,
With the breath of the love of their moonlight
music, the languorous nights of May.

Joy there is in a dear one's laughter, in crumpled
leaf or in faded flower,

Just an echo of tender music faintly stealing from
long ago ;

Sad, sweet smile of a vanished presence—
memories hushed of the wondrous hour

In joy of love in a friend's eyes waking, that only
one who has loved can know.

Joy of the white world's winter glory ; Christmas
bells ere the tired year closes ;

Dear delight of the water's laughter, blossom and
breath of the wondrous spring ;

Kiss of autumn, the mellow-golden—and, oh ! for
the scent of the summer roses ;

Ah ! who dare say, if he be not dead to beauty, that
life is a sunless thing ?

Men may say that our love is but madness,

That laughter with tears shall meet,

But life was not made for sadness

Nor the world for faltering feet,

And though few be our hours of gladness,

Yet, oh ! they are sweet, sweet, sweet !

TOM-TIT.

1909.

Bright through the veil of the dancing snow
To a wide, white world and cold—
From the wood where the Christmas roses blow
Forth 'neath the grey o' the sky—behold !

Flashing fairily blue,
Little friend, is it you
In your armour of azure and gold?
And now on the silvering bough you sit,
Good-morrow, good-morrow, my little Tom-Tit.

The birds have taken their winter flight;
From summer and them did I part
In sorrow ; and now o'er the cocoa-nut white
Like an echo of summer you dart—

You dear little fellow
In gay blue and yellow,
And sunshine you bring to my heart.
A flash and a flutter and home you flit,
Good-bye till to-morrow, my little Tom-Tit

JUNE MUSIC.

1909.

Only the song of the leaves that sigh
Of love to the lingering breeze,
Only the sob of a violin
Heard 'neath the dreaming trees.
Sweet as the sound of an angel's voice ;
Sad as a sinner's sigh ;
Exquisite pleasure, exquisite pain
Woke as it passed me by.
Woke and leapt and lived in my heart,
And faded not soon away,
But stayed as I lay with face to the sky
And watched the leaves at play.
Stayed to lighten the world and me
In the glare of the golden noon :
Sad as the song of the dead, yet sweet
As the first red rose in June.

Only the song of the leaves that sigh
Of love to the lingering breeze,
Only the sob of a violin
Heard 'neath the dreaming trees.
Yet half the joy in the world is born
Of memories such as these !

SONGE D'AUTOMNE.

1909.

I.

There's a song I would be ever singing,
There's a strain that is for ever ringing
Sweet and low and lovely
In my heart.

'Tis the song of Autumn upward sweeping,
Whispering to Summer sunlit sleeping
That she from her children
Soon must part.

Yet to me it brings no touch of sorrow,
Sadly singing of the dark to-morrow,
And the vanished beauty
Of to-day.

Dawn of love with dawn of Autumn breaketh,
Music sweet within my heart awaketh
Faint as fairy minstrels
Far away.

Locks of gold a fair flower-face enshrining,
Eyes in which the light of Spring is shining
Ever forth in perfect
Loveliness.

And a memory in my heart that lingers
Of the sweet, sweet touch of little fingers,
All unconscious of their
Soft caress.

II.

'Tis the song of Autumn blossoms crying
O'er the rose-blown couch of Summer ; sighing
For their lovely Mother
Passed away.

'Tis the sound of Autumn breezes singing
To the weeping flowers at even ; bringing
Comfort at the quiet
Close of day.

Lo ! the trees have earthward shed their glory ;
And the drear wind whispers Winter's story,
Through the barren branches
Creeping cold.

Yet for me joy lives though all be dying,
For the leaves, in lowly splendour lying,
Memories breathe of sun-kissed
Locks of gold.

Now, earth-fragrant in the slowly dawning
Shadows of the blue November morning,
Little breezes sobbing
Come and go.

As they wander, whisper, sigh and shiver,
Love's low music sets the soul aquiver,
Stealing from the happy
Long ago.

Thus the thought of Autumn bringeth gladness
To my heart. Ah ! not for me the sadness
 Born of fading beauty,
 Rain-swept skies ;
For the dead world's music brings me never
Aught save Spring's sweet sunshine, smiling ever
 From the grey-blue Heaven
 Of Her sweet eyes.

DARTMOOR.

1909.

Moorland, ever rolling moorland,
Where the wandering winds of Heaven wake free :
Hail to thee thou home of freedom,
Land of light and life and liberty !

Wide sweet earth and wide sweet Heaven—
Heath and hill and golden-scented gorse :
And o'er all, majestic, silent,
Sleeps the spirit of the eternal tors.

Ever beautiful thou seemest,
Wondrous whatsoever be thy guise.
Whether Spring's bright spirit call thee
Hovering rainbow-winged above thine eyes,

Whether late September sunshine
Turn the rustling bracken frond to gold :
Or the dazzling snowflake hide thee
Falling ever, pitiless and cold.

Brown streams babbling mid the bracken,
Sheepbells' plaintive music far away,
Lonely land of silence, peopled
By pale ghosts of a forgotten day.

Where the all-wise hand of nature
 Rules unfettered by the hand of man—
 Still untouched adown the ages—
 Yet unchanged since first the world began.

Wind-swept stones amid the heather—
 Tombs of many a hero yet unsung ;
 Grey huts where the skin-clad Briton
 Fought and loved while yet the world was young.

Thou hast seen upon the waters,
 Snow-white sail 'neath crimson cliff unfurled ;
 Gazed upon the Roman Cæsar—
 He whose conquering footstep shook the world.

Yea, e'en now the memory haunts thee—
 Gleaming helm and spear in battle lined,
 Standards flaunting, legions tramping,
 Warring note of trumpets on the wind.

Mother of a hundred rivers,
 Spirit of a thousand rippling rills !
 On thy bosom brood for ever
 Shadows of the everlasting hills.

Where of old the white-robed Druid
 High in wild barbaric triumph stood,
 Far aloft the knife uplifting,
 Crimson, dripping with the victim's blood ;

Chanting in the golden sunset
On the craggy hill top wild and lone,
Worship, prayer and adoration
To his deities of wood and stone.

Moorland, golden purple moorland,
From my thoughts thou canst not fade away.
In thy beauty, in thy grandeur
I will keep thee in my heart for aye.

THE PYRAMIDS.

(A Vision of Cleopatra.)

1909.

I stood alone amid the desert lands
And watched the changeless river onward roll
For ever. Silence sank into my soul
Pressed by the shadowy weight of unseen hands.
There, 'mid a silent world of shifting sands,
I stood alone 'twixt earth and Heaven, and gazed
To where afar, athwart the midnight sky,
The Pyramids in silent splendour raised
Their towers of moonlit mystery.

Bright as a golden lily, ripple-driven,
Floating beneath the hawthorn flowers of June ;
So, stargirt, in the purple pool of Heaven
Swam the low glory of the desert moon.
And all the earth lay trembling in a swoon
Of slumbering loveliness ; until my brain
Thrilled through with joy and the desire to weep,
A perfect pleasure blent with perfect pain :
And earth sank from me into sleep.

Sweet music sounded ; ghostly hands upraised
My head, slow stealing from the shadowy vast ;
And through the moon-kissed veils of sleep I gazed
Down the dim aisles of the forgotten past.

There 'neath the sliding galley's gilded mast,
 The changing charm and soul-seducing smile
 Of her whose perfumed pageant cleft the wave,
 When, golden-throned, she floated down the Nile
 To welcome home her warrior slave.

She on whose breast the Roman Antony
 Lay lapped in languorous love; deep draining
 down

The rose-crowned cup of passion's ecstasy;
 Heaven in her smile and Hell beneath her frown.
 O white, broad brow beneath Uræus' crown!
 O beauty as of roses dew-empared—
 All tears and smiles swift changing as the wind!
 Ah glimmering lodestar of the lovesick world!
 White-armed enchantress of mankind!

Thou Cleopatra, Egypt's goddess queen,
 Siren, upon whose lips men hung and died!
 When shall another such as thou be seen?
 Never perchance, though earth and sea be wide!
 Such fatal loveliness, such perfect pride!
 Pride that, though pierced by conquest's pitiless
 dart,
 Could show to those who would have taken thee
 The crawling horror hid beneath thy heart,
 That set the imperial spirit free.

So men and mortal glory pass away.
Ye through the changing centuries alone
Rise ever, smiling scorn at Time's decay,
Imperishable monuments of stone !
For men fulfil, throughout their little day,
Their destiny ; then at their Maker's will
Pass back to darkness whence they came. While
 ye
Face, all majestic and unchanging still,
The million years that yet may be.

MARY OF ENGLAND.

November 1909.

Silence. The laggard hours crept slow : and day
 Died darkling in the west. The sun's last gleam
 Pierced a red pathway through the hall, as though
 A finger, crimsoned with her people's blood,
 Stretched forth to stab the heart of England's
 Queen :

All motionless she sat. One trembling hand
 Pressed her pale cheek ; the other at her side
 Hung limply as a broken flower ; her robe
 Flung back the sunset splendour. Her dull eyes
 Stared through the shadows of the amber gloom
 Hopeless, unseeing ; and the wan white face
 Shone, through the mist of twilight, terrible
 As some lost soul in utterest agony.

“ Calais hath fall'n,” she moaned, “ hath fall'n !
 the last,

Last bitter drop within my cup of shame.
 Oh God, that I were dead ! ” and then again
 “ Calais hath fall'n ! Calais hath fall'n ! ” and so
 Fell silent. From the shadowed window-seat
 Stole forth a little maid, who with light step
 Crossed the dim floor, and kneeling by the throne,
 Kissed the cold hand. “ Dear Lady, grieve no
 more,”

She whispered, “ Come, let me but sing to thee

And strive to charm away thy sadness." " Child,"
 She murmured gently, " I cannot forget.
 This is the end ! Nothing is left me now
 Save the dark message of the barren years
 Telling of shame, shame, shame ! ah, what is left
 For such as me ? I have fought the fight in vain,
 I have toiled and striven and loved—ah loved ! and
 he

Has left me. And for all reward I have
 Hate ! ah, my God ! 'tis true. The world, yea all
 Hate me ! My people hate me ! Philip hates me !
 Sometimes I think that God must hate me too !

What think you child ? We are taught God
 cannot hate,

And yet—ah no—I am mad ! mad ! did you speak ?
 Sing then ! Sing !

So. Thou hast a sweet voice, child—
 Most sweet—ah no ! not that, some other song,
 Not that ! Ah, Philip, dost remember now
 That night ? How long ago ? How long ago ?
 I sang to you that song. Do you remember ?
 'Twas in the garden that I sang to you
 One night in June. 'Twas then you said you loved
 me,

And kissed me 'mid the roses ; and my heart
 Laughed and the flowers laughed and the whole
 wide world

Sang and the stars sang too ! Ah Philip ! Philip !
 You have forgot but I can ne'er forget.

Naught has been spared me. I have striven long
 To turn my people to the one true faith,
 Striven and toiled and slain and sinned in vain !
 Alas ! to me I deemed 'twas given to be
 An instrument within the hand of God
 To work my land's salvation. And behold !
 For guerdon I have won a nation's scorn ;
 I have called hatred down upon my head ;
 I have made red my hands with innocent blood,
 My power a mockery and my name a curse !
 My life a broken thing ! My royalty
 A rag for knaves to scoff at ! What is life
 To such as me ? And yet I must live on,
 Live on and smile and suffer. I am England's
 queen,
 And queens must smile to hide their broken hearts.
 I am weary, oh ! so weary. When will peace
 Come back to me ? Ah ! never, never again.
 There is no peace for such as me.
 Ah me !

My heart is yearning for the cloister walls ;
 My soul is sighing for the quiet lawns
 Of shadowed convents calm. There, only there,
 Lies in this world the way of peace for me.
 Yet 'tis the way of peace that lies through tears,
 Through sorrow and forgetfulness of all
 That made the world so fair ; sad road to rest
 For weary travellers, whose faltering feet

Have trod too long the rough ways of the world.”
She paused.

The light lay dead ; and the wan moon
Shone through the shadows shimmering into
pearl.

The little maid crept closer ; and again,
Faint as a spirit moaning far away,
Stole through the dark the murmur of the queen.
“ I had dreamed a child’s soft hand would smooth
away

All bitterness. Ah ! Philip, did you think
I cared not ? Oh ! each night upon my knees
I send up prayers from my poor hungering heart—
Heartbroken prayers to the calm heavens above
That look un pitying down, for but one child—
One little child that I may call my own.
I have prayed : there is no answer to my prayer.
I have knelt in anguish at God’s throne and He
Is silent—Not for me, oh ! not for me
The touch of tiny hands, the joy unknown
Of clinging arms, warm cheeks and dear delight
Of childish feet : the little lisping love
Of baby lips !—Not mine, ah not for me !
Here then all ends.

Dear God ! And I have dreamed
Of one whom Thou in pity should’st send to be
A star to light the path of my lone life ;
The one white flower in all my barren world.

And he should win me back my people's love !
 And he in after years, when I lie low
 In the quiet grave at rest, should reign, and spread
 God's faith from shore to shore, from sea to sea !
 Oh ! he should be the second Prince of Peace—
 Light of salvation to the darkened earth
 Low groping through the mists of sin ; his hand
 Stretch forth to save ; his smile shine forth to bear
 All comfort ; and his voice to lead mankind
 Upward to lie before God's golden throne
 In faith and fear and love—He ! my one joy !
 My hope ! my star ! my world ! my prince ! my
 son—

My little son !

Where are my dreams to-day ?
 To-day ? " She rose o' the sudden,
 " Ah God ! " she cried,
 " I cannot bear it—Oh ! I cannot bear
 The shame, the hate, the scorn, the bitterness
 That are my portion. I can turn to none
 For pity. There is no pity in all my world.
 My people's hate is as a knife that stabs !
 They wish me dead ; and every hour, that falls
 Into the arms of Time, draws nearer now
 Their heart's desire. Shall all my toil be vain ?
 Yea vain ! for she "—

Her hands clenched and her face
 Blazed into passion !—" She, Elizabeth,

Anne Boleyn's daughter, sister? no sister of mine—

Never ! This woman—God help me—She I say
 Shall set her hand where mine shall rest no more ;
 Shall sweep away what I have wrought in tears ;
 Uproot the seed I sowed in agony ;
 Crush all for which I have drenched my soul in
 blood.

All that has been shall be not ; all that was
 Be as it was before :—save only I !
 And I shall lie pent up in the narrow grave
 All powerless to save what once was mine.
 Powerless this voice for the black mould stifles it.
 Powerless this hand for it hath fallen to dust !
 Powerless these lips for the blind worms feed on
 them.

My day is night now, and my night a Hell
 Through whose cold hours pale shadows crawl
 and creep

Around me ; I feel their chill upon my heart,
 The touch of clammy fingers at my breast ;
 The shudder of their breath steals through my hair
 In silence terrible. Then pale, passionless eyes
 Search out my soul ; the grey gloom shivers with
 hands,

And ghostly voices tremble through the dark,
 Whispering—' 'Tis time ! We died by thee, and
 thou

Shalt more than die ! ' And horror chains me
 down

Till with the dawn the wailing whispers die
 And all is still again—I shall go mad !
 'Tis pain to live and yet I dare not die !
 'Tis pain to love and yet I must love on !
 I am as 'twere a shadow, dwelling apart
 In a land of shadows—shunned by the world—at
 last.

Left lonely now to love in vain ; alone
 To weep ; alone to live ; alone to die !”
 Down on her knees she sank, raising her eyes
 Wet with the merciful tears.

On the dim wall

An image gleamed and the moonbeams kissed her
 face,

The pale, pure Mother of Him who died to save.
 Then the sad queen stretched forth her arms and
 prayed.

“ O Mother of all pity, power and love !
 Bend down a little from thy golden throne
 To pity thy child's sorrow.

Grant me power

Of love to win my loved one back to me :
 Sweet Mary Mother, give me back his heart ;
 Give back to me once more my people's love.
 Or, if there be no pardon for such as me,
 Grant thou me strength to bear my punishment,
 Grant me that peace which heeds not thoughts of
 earth,
 But lights the soul toward Heaven.

Ah ! pity me !

Mother ! I am thy child, and I have strayed
Far from the path. Oh guide me back again.
And through the coming years, if any there be
Left to me still, look down and comfort me.
So through my loveless life I yet shall live
For nought save love, until, in God's good time,
I pass from sorrowing to thy perfect peace !''

ON THE CLIFFS.

1910.

White foam flying,
Grey gulls crying,
Wild waves rolling far across the sobbing sea,
Wet winds wailing,
Cold clouds sailing,
And all the wide world empty, dear, save just for
you and me.

Blue wave breaking,
Soft winds waking
A million merry ripples on the smiling summer sea,
Red cliffs glowing,
Wild rose blowing,
And all the wide world empty, dear, save just for
you and me.

White sails gleaming,
Two hearts dreaming,
As love's low whisper wandereth across the silent
sea—
In rain or sunny weather
So long as we're together,
What matters all the world, my dear, for you're
the world to me.

BUTTERMERE. (A Picture.)

1910.

We have climbed the topmost ridge, this cairn of
stone

Fronting the open sky, unchallenged, tells
Our goal is won. Here let us rest awhile,
Here, where the music of the winds is blown
Soft towards us through the silence, and the smile
Of sunset deepens on the distant fells.

Here, for one moment sweet, we may forget
All thoughts of life and self, and only know
That God has made His world most beautiful—
Down gazing from the grey rock-parapet
To where the wood's dim twilight, green and cool,
Shadows the calm of the blue lake below.

Thou art a jewel for the world's delight.
The murmur of the fall's deep laughter fills
The valley peace with music for thy dreams :
Dreams when the magic of the moon sleeps white
Upon thy waters, or the sunlight gleams
Through purple shadows on thy windy hills.

A star laughed in the sunset as day died
Low at our feet, and the faint moon climbs slow
Above the silent crags, the wind grows cold,
And light lies crimson on the dark hillside.
Night's feet are on the mountains as of old.
Come, we have had our moment, let us go.

A LA BELLE ETOILE.

(After reading Stevenson's " With a donkey in the
Cevennes.")

1910.

Bells through the darkness calling
Over the land !
Shadows of night are falling
Here where I stand.
Here, where the pineboughs dreaming
Whisper on high,
And the white stars are gleaming
Over the sky.
Through the warm darkness ringing,
What is't your music tells?
What is the song ye are singing,
Beautiful bells?

Bells through the darkness calling
Tender and low !
Shadows of night are falling
Soft as I go.
Here, where the world lies sleeping,
Onward I pass,
Kissed by the wild wind sweeping
Over the grass.
Through the night-silence ringing,
What is't your music tells?

What is the song ye are singing,
Wonderful bells?

Bells through the darkness calling
Under the sky !

Shadows of night are falling

Here where I lie

Low in the fields that love me

Under the stars :

Here, where no roof above me

Blackens and bars.

O'er the dark hedgerows ringing,

What is't your music tells?

What is the song ye are singing,

Heavenly bells?

Bells through the darkness calling

From far away !

Shadows of night were falling

O'er me to-day.

Dark seemed the way before me,

Joyless the night.

Now, with the white stars o'er me,

I dream of delight.

Through the dim woodlands ringing,

Gladness your music tells,

Joy is the song ye are singing,

Beautiful bells !

THE ROAD.

1910.

On either hand the meadows lie
 Golden and grey and green,
And far away to the edge o' the sky
 The white road runs between.
The meadows lie on either hand
 Golden and green and grey :
And the road runs on to a magic land,
 Wonderful, far away.
If some good fairy would give me wings
 And teach me the way to fly,
I would go to look for beautiful things
 Where the white road meets the sky.

I often want to start away
 On the road, and I always said
That if I walked the whole of the day
 I'd be back in time for bed.
But mother says it is much too far,
 And if ever I wish to go
To see the land where the fairies are
 I must wait till I'm big, you know.
Yet somehow I don't quite understand,
 And I often wonder why
It should take so long to reach the land
 Where the white road meets the sky.

I look at the fields and the road all day,
And when I'm in bed at night
I dream I'm ever so far away
On the road by candlelight.
And I see all sorts of wonderful things,
Castles and crystal streams,
Beautiful ladies and queens and kings—
But then it is only dreams.
Yet—dragons and giants and princes tall,
Witches and rugs that fly—
I'm quite, quite sure we should find them all
Where the white road meets the sky.

Someone must know—there are lots of men
Who start on the road, I've seen—
They go, but they never come back again
To tell me where they've been.
So I must wait till I'm big, you see—
And then at last, some day,
We'll go together,—just you and me,—
Along the road and away—
Away by the fields where the skylark sings
And the breeze-blown grasses sigh—
Away to look for beautiful things
Where the white road meets the sky.

TO SIS IN THE HAPPY VALLEY.

1910.

Spring in the Happy valley,
And the wind was strong and sweet.

The primrose stars shone faint and fair
In the grasses at our feet.

And we picked them 'neath the treetops
That whisper to and fro,

There in the Happy valley,
One April year ago.

Sun in the Happy valley,
As we wandered hand in hand

To where the edge of the woodland fronts
The smiling summer land.

And we lay in the dark green hollow,
Where the pine trees murmur low,

There in the Happy valley,
One August year ago.

Leaves in the Happy valley,
Crimson and brown and gold :

And the earth rain-scented softly sang
The song of the year grown old.

But the world was a mist of glory
As we stood in the sunset's glow,

There in the Happy valley,
One Autumn year ago.

Winds in the Happy valley,
Wailing and dark and drear :
And the leafless trees were weeping
O'er the grave of the dying year.

But green was the pine-treed hollow
As we wandered soft and slow,
There in the Happy valley,
One Winter year ago.

Since then we have learnt life's sadness,
We have known the need of tears ;
And sorrow must sometimes darken
The sunshine in after years.

But beauty and gladness ever
Will welcome us, dear, I know,
There in the Happy valley,
Where we wandered long ago.

THE WOOING OF SIGNY.

MAY, 1910.

Signy, King Atli's daughter,
Dreamed in her windswept tower ;
Dreamed with her face love-pillowed
In the grey of the twilight hour ;
Dreamed of the lips of heroes
And the light of the years to be
In the arms of the blue-eyed Sigurd,
As the sunlight left the sea.

Red as dawn was the curve of her lips,
Deep as the sea her eyes ;
And her hair shone bright as a golden cloud
Caught from the sunset skies.
She sighed, and the world hung trembling ;
She sang, and it smiled again ;
For her voice was the wide earth's music,
And her laughter maddened men.

Knelt at her feet, love-shaken,
Sigurd--Sigurd the fair ;
And the arms of his love were round her
And his lips were on her hair.
Long in her ear he whispered,
Tender his voice and sweet ;

But never a word she answered
Till he knelt and lay at her feet,

Murmuring " Tell ah, tell me ! "

And she answered soft and low :

' 'Even to-day I love thee

As I loved thee long ago.

But yet to-day I do swear it,

Yea now as I swore it then—

I will wed with none save a hero,

A Lord of the lords of men ! "

Swift as a star that falleth,

The flash of his blade's white fire

Mirrored the moon : and his eyes were mad

With the flame of his heart's desire.

And he cried and he said " I love thee !

Yet never a man was born

To lie at the foot of a woman

And hear her words of scorn.

I go ! and the deeps of the ocean

Shall know the voice of their lord !

The kings of the earth shall tremble

At the sweep of my swinging sword !

The stars shall sing of my glory !

Yea, love, if it needs must be,

I will make the world the beacon torch

That guides me back to thee ! "

And she watched his ship sail out, sail out,
 To the wild waves' trembling tune,
 Till it sank from sight o'er the edge of the world,
 Under a silver moon.
 White-armed and lily slender,
 Ah fair and proud was she—
 Signy, King Atli's daughter,
 The rose of the Northern sea.

II.

Signy, King Atli's daughter,
 Dreamed in her windswept tower ;
 Dreamed with her face arm-pillowed
 In the grey of the twilight hour.
 And low to the winds she whispered,
 'Mid the song of the sobbing sea—
 " Ah ! love, I have waited so long, so long !
 Wilt thou never come back to me ?

I cry, as I see to westward
 Strange sails of shadowy ships,
 'Twas the pride of my heart that uttered
 The words that rose to my lips.
 The years leap forth from the darkness
 To pass to the dark again.
 Yet ever thy white sail lingers,
 And ever I watch in vain.

Soft from the shores of the sunset
 The silent ships steal home ;
 And the white sails faintly follow
 Shadowing the twilight foam.
 And I hear their low love-laughter
 Who never again shall part :
 For them joy waits in the morning—
 And for me?—My broken heart !

Oh ! my eyes wax dim with weeping,
 And my heart grows old with pain,
 For the rose of my youth is withered,
 And the dawn of my love lies slain.
 I call—ah God !—and my answer
 The moan of the endless sea !
 Ah ! love, I have waited so long, so long !
 Wilt thou never come back to me ? ”

III.

The heart of the world lay dreaming
 Of the wild waves' trembling tune,
 And a ship sailed up o'er the edge of the world,
 Under a silver moon.
 And there on her deck lay Sigurd—
 Sigurd, lord of the sea—
 For the waves of the wide world knew not
 A mightier man than he.

And lo ! the deeps of the ocean
 Had heard the voice of their lord ;
 The kings of the earth had trembled
 At the sweep of his swinging sword.
 The stars sang anew of his glory,
 And, crushed 'neath the victor's frown,
 Red with the blood of their thousands,
 The nations bowed them down.

Wan 'mid the whitening waters
 The hissing keel fled fast,
 But low on the deck lay Sigurd
 And clung to the shrieking mast.
 White was his face and wasted—
 His eyes were wild and wide—
 The moonlight flashed on a spearhilt,
 And the spear was in his side.

And he stretched his arms to the darkness
 And the wailing winds on high,
 Crying, " Dear love, I conquer—
 But I conquer but to die !
 There, in the last long battle,
 The foeman struck the blow !
 For the gods on high have called me
 And I do not fear to go.

I have lived my life, and the darkness
 Must close about my way—

But, borne on the winds, my glory
Rings round the world to-day.
Love ! I have kept my promise !
Signy, flower of my heart !
E'en now, if the gods have heard me,
I shall kiss thee ere we part ! ”

* * *

High in her tower he saw her,
As the rolling ship rushed by :
Dying, his arms stretched upward
Trembling 'twixt sea and sky.
Low in the ship she saw him
And stretched wild arms in vain !
Then—Nought save the cold sea singing,
And the rushing of the rain !

WAKE, LOVE, MINE OWN !

SONG.

1910.

Wake, love, mine own !

Wake, for warm light through wind-kissed leaves
is gleaming ;

Soft on the air the scent of roses blown !

Ah ! sweet, of thee my morning heart is
dreaming !

Wake, love, mine own !

Laugh, love, mine own !

Laugh out, my sweet, and set the flowerbells
ringing—

Perchance some fairy echo, faintly thrown,

May charm my way and in my heart rest singing,

Laugh, love mine own !

Weep, love, mine own !

Weep for a love that needs must die to-morrow !

Yet not for grief, but joy of loves unknown,

Weep. Thy young heart as yet has known not
sorrow—

Weep, love, mine own !

Sleep, love, mine own !

Sleep, till the spirit of my love to greet thee

Adown the poppied ways of sleep hath flown !

There, if not here, sweet, in my dreams I'll meet
thee !

Sleep, love, mine own !

IF LOVE WERE ALL.

SONG.

1910.

If love were all and life were free
 Of sorrow, sin and misery ;
 Could the dull cares of every day,
 The toils and tumults, pass away
 And leave but love for you and me !

Then, sweet, I'd sit and sing to thee
 Old shepherd songs of Arcady
 From dawn until the vales grew grey !
 If love were all !

But love's a golden argosy
 Adrift on life's tempestuous sea :
 Scarce may we gather, as we stay,
 One jewel on our crowded way !
 Ah ! sweet, how fair this world might be
 If love were all !

IF THOU WERT MINE.

SONG.

1910.

If thou wert mine to love and fold
Within my arms, and all the gold
And glory of thy gleaming hair
Were mine to clasp and kiss, and there
Close to my heart of hearts to hold :

Then all the joy that e'er was told
Of love in distant days of old
Should light our way, my lady fair,
If thou wert mine !

Dear, though the envious world were cold,
And grief's grey waves about us rolled,
I'd laugh at every little care
And bring to thee, my sweet, to wear
The flower of love made manifold,
If thou wert mine !

ON THE RIVER.

SONG.

1910.

(Written after canoeing on the Cam.)

O sweet Spring days !

Upon the shining reaches of the river,
When April dances down the flowery ways
Above the fens where scented breezes shiver :

O sweet Spring days !

Dream-golden days !

When on soft banks faint hawthorns pale and
quiver,
And drowsy sweet, the slow bough softly sways
Above the silent reaches of the river :

Dream-golden days !

Dear far off days !

Adown the rippling reaches of the river,
Deep in my wandering heart their sweetness
stays :

Ah ! fade ye may, but ye can leave me never,

Dear far off days !

Through golden days

Could we, adown the reaches of life's river,
Glide on, dear love, to parting of the ways,
Then kiss farewell—and meet to see for ever

Heaven's golden days !

THE DREAM CITY.

SONG.

1910.

The low wave whispers at our feet
And white stars softly shine ;
So kiss me on the lips, my sweet,
And lay your hand in mine,
That we may tread the path that lies
Where bright the moonlight gleams,
And pass beyond the silent skies
To seek the land of Dreams,
 My sweet,
To seek the land of Dreams !

Perchance that path o'er waters grey
May lead, for you and me,
To that Dream City far away
Across the starlit sea.
So, sweet, when we have softly passed
The long night journey through,
Pray that our feet may find at last
The land where Dreams come true,
 Dear heart,
The land where Dreams come true !

AFTER THE DUEL.

SONG.

1910.

“ One kiss, the last !—while yet the glow
Of life burns dimly, ere I go
To that lone land where little feet
No more my listening heart shall greet
With music where the roses blow !

I fought for thee. Thou canst not know
Why. But my life was thine. And so—
Yea, even though thou hast scorned me, sweet—
One kiss—the last ! ”

The proud lips trembled, sighing slow
And tender “ I have sinned, and lo !—
True heart, for sake of summer sweet,
Wild woodlands where we used to meet
In dear, dead days of long ago—
One kiss—the last ! ”

THE LAND-BABY.

1910.

(After seeing Collier's picture in last year's
Academy.)

A mermaid sat by the silver sea,
(Oh ! but the wind sighed soft in the foam !)
And she sang to herself, as she idled there
By the blue of the waves in the sunlight fair,
 Dreamily, drowsily, dreamily,
As she combed the strands of her gleaming hair,
Her golden hair with a pearly comb,
A sad sweet song of strange things to be,
There by the side of the silver sea,
When the wind was soft in the foam !

A little land-baby crept down to the sea,
(Ah ! but the wind sang sweet in the spray !)
And there, 'neath the seacliff worn and wild,
Stretched tiny hands to the sea and smiled,
 Happily, wonderingly, happily.
And the mermaid longed for the little child,
To take him and love him and tenderly play
In the caves of pearl, till his childish gleam
Made music sweet in the depths of the sea,
When the wind was sweet in the spray.

" Little land-baby, hither, come hither !
 Little soft flower of the wondrous world !
 Fear not, but follow me, follow me, whither,
 Over the wave-kissed rocks rainbow-emppearled,
 We, the band of the sea's bright daughters,
 Flash in the foam-drift and sing in the spray,
 Lulled in the lap of the whispering waters :
 Little land-baby, away, come away !"

And wonder dawned in the childish eyes,
 (Oh ! but the wind sighed soft in the foam !)
 As the mermaid sang of far lands unknown,
 Where soft waves whisper in caverns lone,
 Lingering sea-sweet lullabies ;
 And the sea-king sifs on a sapphire throne,
 Of coral caves, and her wondrous home
 In the land where the twilight never dies,
 And the mermen utter sweet melodies,
 While the wind sighs soft in the foam.

The little land-baby ran down to the sea,
 (Ah ! but the wind sang shrill in the spray !)
 Ran the darkening sands along,
 And stretched his arms to the magic song,
 Longingly, lovingly, longingly !
 But the sunlight died and the wind blew strong,
 And the child's heart feared and he fled away,
 Far from the wild waves' cruelty,

And the mermaid sobbed with the sobbing sea,
While the stormwind sang in the spray.
“ Little land-baby, hither, come hither !
Little soft flower of the wondrous world !
Fear not but follow me, follow me, whither,
Over the wave-kissed rocks rainbow-empearled,
We, the band of the sea's bright daughters,
Flash in the foam-drift and sing in the spray,
Lulled in the lap of the whispering waters :
Little land-baby, away, come away ! ”

IN A CHURCH.

1910.

I.

Cold was the church and grey :
Cold the dim arches in the tremulous gloom :
Outside on pavements where the sun had lain
 Shuddering from far away,
Like dead, white fingers tapping on a tomb,
The pitiless song of the cold Autumn rain !

Dark ! not a movement stirs
The silent throng of worshippers !
Slow, solemn voices steal across the dark,
Sullenly thrills the organ's trembling tone :
There on the altar a lamp burns,—one spark
 Twinkling uncertainly afar.
Dark : and my soul feels deadened and alone—
Lost in the night without one guiding star.

II.

Then up aloft, one voice, a boy's clear singing—
Singing his soul out—up and out and away—
Far from this earth, on wings of Angels, bringing
Tears to my eyes, peace to my heart, and joy
Perfect amid this life's imperfect day :
Freeing my soul of a chain—

Out from the gloom and the darkness again,
 Outward and upward to God, and—only the voice
 of a boy.

Beautiful voice, sing on !
 Bring me not back too soon
 From the gates of Heaven !
 To-day to my heart 'tis given
 To hear the Angels' golden tune—
 Only to-day, sweet voice, only to-day
 Sing to me, guide me and gladden me, stay with
 me, stay !
 But 'tis gone—ah my heart—it is gone !

Yet not in vain ; for one moment sweet
 I have dwelt beyond the skies,
 And have heard soft sounds of the joyous feet
 Of those who were parted, again to meet
 Where loveliness never dies.
 Ah me ! one hour have I walked with God,
 And seen with unclouded eyes ;
 Yea ! passed the gateway of pearl, and trod
 The gardens of Paradise !

THE FIRST OF JUNE.

1910.

Sweetly smiles the sunset, through dark boughs
golden gleaming,
Tenderly to westward, faint and far away.
Up into the glory of the sky my heart drifts dream-
ing,
Dreaming in Earth's wonder hour at closing of the
day.

Sadly sighs the sunset, as lost winds wander
weeping,
Weeping with the nightingales for the morns of
May,
May, whose fragrant loveliness in the grave is
sleeping,
Sleeping in that Heaven of dead, sweet things
that cannot stay.

Red amid her roses, royal June is ringing
Joy through waking woodlands, where her white
steps stray,
Glories of the chestnut low their lamps are
swinging,
Swinging in the sweetness of the silver-scented
spray.

Softly sinks the sunset : twilight bells are pealing
Low adown the valley, where the children play :
Now to magic music little feet are stealing,
Stealing on to fairyland along the golden way.

Dim and dark the sunset : the birds have ceased
their singing,

Splendour of the radiant rose fades to green and
grey :

Shadowed in the mists of pearl, fairy forms are
winging,

Winging through a starry veil to steal my soul
away.

Dead and gone the sunset : and, as night is
falling,

Faint with June's first sweetness, when the lilacs
sway,

Dim with far sweet memories, the voice of May is
calling

Sadly to my twilight heart at closing of the day.

THE INVALID'S PRAYER.

1910.

Let me not die in spring : I could not bear
To leave the meadows where the breezes wake
On wild March mornings : or the cowslips break
About the feet of April frail and fair,
The young year's maiden love : for whose sweet
sake
The primrose stars with tears of joy are wet,
And daffodils their golden music shake
To greet the winds that wake the violet.

Let me not in the summer pass away,
When skies are warm, and all the world is sweet
With scent of roses round about my feet,
And glory of the jasmine's trailing spray
Above, as in the shadowed window seat
I lie and watch the swift-winged swallows dart
Through blue, bright air, till sunset shadows meet
To weave their web of peace about my heart.

Let me not in the autumn close my eyes
To all the wealth and wonder of the gold
And crimson splendour of the year grown old,
And clear blue sweetness of October skies.
Ah God ! I would not lie alone and cold
In the dark earth, while yet the world is fair,

While yet life's loveliness may softly fold
Mine eyes, and warm winds wander through my
hair.

But when above the dead year's grave shriek shrill
The winter storms, and o'er the white world, slow
And shining, softly sinks the silver snow :
Then, when my cold, sad heart is silent, fill
My quiet hands with sweet, white flowers : and so
Kiss me farewell and fold them on my breast,
Gently. Weep not, nor sorrow. For I go
Glad-eyed in Heaven's all-perfect Spring to rest.

IN MEMORIAM—KING EDWARD VII.

1910.

Peace ! he is resting with the quiet dead ;
He has passed into the everlasting sleep ;
Peace ! for to-day the hushed world bows her head,
And Earth's sad nations weep.

And thou, his England, thou for whose dear sake
He still had loved and striven to the end,
Weep merciful tears, lest thy sad heart should
break
For him, thy King and friend.

For though adown the ever flying years
The changing world rolls on from day to day,
Though grief is silent, and his people's tears
Have fallen and passed away,

Yet shall his memory live, and reverently
On unborn lips hereafter shall not cease
To sound his name,—the star of chivalry—
His reign—the star of peace.

YEARNING.

1910.

The night is cold about me as I stand
 Beside my window, sighing for the day—
 The dead, sweet day, asleep in that dim land
 Of glories that have been and passed away,
 To light perchance some other world than ours,
 Beyond the cloudy gateway of the west.

And sad winds, wandering in search of rest,
 Sob onward softly through the silent flowers—
 Sob on and lightly falter, fade and die.

The scent of earth, made sweet with summer rain,
 Drifts slow across my face; the cold grey sky
 Darkens. And in my heart a nameless pain
 Throbs; and my eyes are wet with burning tears,
 Unshed, yet bitter as the vanished years
 That were and are not.

And I stretch wild hands
 Out to the greyness of the sky, and call
 Shrill to the pitiless silence, till there stands
 A vision wrapt in gloom; and, slowly, all

The dark unfolds about the magic feet
 Of her whose beauty I have loved and known
 In other worlds, untrodden and alone,
 Beyond the shores where dawn and darkness meet.
 And as I gaze, all sense of time and space
 Falls from me in that moment of delight,
 Beyond all dreams of Heaven. Until her face
 Fades, and her feet pass onward through the
 night ;

Pass on and leave me lonely ; and again,
 Deep in my heart, throbs on that nameless pain !

* * *

Love, love, my love ! I sigh for thee to-day,
 Faint as a dream and distant as a star,
 Love, love, my love ! Oh why art thou so far,
 So far, unutterably far away?

A PRAYER.

1910.

Give me one hour of life !

Life lived through each swift moment : life aflame
With leaping fires that burn, and lights that glow
Through the soul's darkness, till the tingling
frame

The height and depth of grief and joy shall know
In one all-splendid moment !—and so creep
Through darkness back to sleep !

Give me one hour of love !

Love all triumphant, love that bursts apart
Life's barrier to flood the world and fold
The stars with glory ; till the trembling heart
Learn all that Heaven and all that Hell can hold
Of joy and pain eternal !—and so meet
Death's kiss and find it sweet !

SUNSET DREAMS

1910.

The world is hushed and the shadows fall
Soft from the rosy sky :
A sunflush sleeps on the western wall,
And the sweet bird-voices die.

Ah, love ! the work of the day is done
And the evening hour is sweet ;
So now when the dawn and the dark are one,
Ere the pulse of the night's slow feet

Summon the stars, and the sunlight die
On the laughing lips of day,
Kiss me and come where the low winds sigh
To the sunset far away !

Oh come ! we will sail to a magic shore
That our souls have known of old,
In a rainbow skiff from the angels' store,
O'er the cloud-world ocean's gold ;

When wavelets, rosily sunset-kissed,
Ripple and crisp and curl,
Past isles of Heaven's own amethyst,
Afloat in a sea of pearl ;

Onward, to anchor hand in hand,
At the cloud-built gate that bars
The golden path to the fairyland
That lies beyond the stars.

For there the hours their vigil keep
And the dim veils drift apart,
Where Beauty's self lies soft asleep
On the sunset flower's heart.

And pearly palace and tower and dome
Tremble through mists that glide
O'er lands that lie in the floating foam
Of the twilight's tender tide.

And there I pray we may wander, sweet,
By the far off mystic sea,
Till the God of the sunset guide our feet
In the way of Eternity.

TO U.K.

1910.

You asked me once if I had ever seen
The fairies, and I sadly answered, "No,"
And smiled. Yet in my heart a voice sighed low
And murmured of the magic Might-Have-Been.

But you in triumph sweetly laughed, and all
Your dark curls danced behind you as you passed
Across the room towards me, till at last,
With cheeks divinely dimpled and a small

White hand against your lips, you whispered : " I
Have seen them dancing with the fairy queen
Upon the bluebells in the woodland green ;
Perhaps you, too, shall see them bye and bye."

Ah ! little questioner, with eyes as blue
 As those bell-flowers on which your fairies dance !
 I spoke too hastily, for I perchance
 Long years ago have seen the fairies too.

On winter mornings, ere the world was light,
 I woke and read of islands far away,
 Of magic lands and castles old and grey,
 Of captive princess, king and squire and knight.

Then 'twas I strayed by the enchanted stream,
 While ever close, my wandering feet to guide,
 The fairies floated singing at my side ;
 And now—the end and waking from the dream !

I may not see them now. Mine eyes are cold :
 Yet still far echoes trembling down the years
 Wake in my heart, with laughter and with tears,
 The breath of joy and wonder as of old.

For when the glad thrush early wakes and sings
 And all the world lies laughing to the dawn—
 Faint music through the listening flowers is borne,
 And on the air the whisper of their wings.

And sometimes while the twilight shadows fall
 And glories deepen in the splendid west,
 When all my heart is quiet and at rest,
 I hear the fairy voices softly call.

Ah ! child, if still you build your magic towers
And make your palace garden bright and fair,
Soon shall you find a fairy singing there
Or dancing lightly with the dancing flowers.

And she shall gently take you by the hand
And lead you through the dim, sweet fields of
sleep,
Where bluebells glimmer in the dreamwoods deep,
To dance with her in moonlit fairyland.

PAOLO AND FRANCESCA.

(From the picture by G. F. Watts.)

1910.

I dreamed that as I flashed through veils of space
Last night, two spirits passed me on the wind :
A man and woman whom before, behind,
White raiment girt in ghastly folds ; his face
Burned as he clasped her in a wild embrace,
And in his eyes desire like a flame
Shone red, till 'neath the ghastly winding sheet
From hot, parched lips, the broken whisper
came—

“ My death was bitter, but my love was sweet ! ”

The woman raised her head and from her hair
The white robe fell, baring her face to sight—
A face of beauty, pale, and wondrous fair,
With sad eyes gazing upward, wide and bright,
To seek his lips ; and softly through the night
Came her slow murmur, “ Kiss me once again.
Bend down and hold me closer. Keep my feet
From falling, for my eyes are dim with pain,
And death is bitter, though our love was sweet.”

Then, as the soft, sad whispers died away,
Deep in my heart there dawned a memory slow
Of two bright, passionate souls, who long ago
Loved, sinned and died in one swift summer's day.
And so I woke and deemed it sweet to pray
For two, though young, with sorrow sore
oppressed,
That hoping oft hereafter they should meet
With pity and so pass at last to rest.
For death is bitter, and their love was sweet.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI.

1910.

I looked on you ; and the flowers
 Laughed under my feet.
You looked on me ; and the hours
 On God's earth were sweet.

You looked on me ; and a light
 Was on land and sea.
I looked on you ; and the night
 Rent the soul of me.

I looked on you ; and I trod
 Love's heaven on high.
You looked from me ; and, ah God !
 It is hard to die.

THE REJECTED LOVER.

1910.

I do not ask for love, I only pray
This : that of all the smiles that day by day
Make sweet thy face, one, only one may be
A star to light my feet upon their way.

One smile enough for me !

'Tis little that I ask. When thou art gone
My world will darken, and the sun that shone
Grow dim. Till then—where'er thou art, to be—
Still, still, unseen, unknown, to love thee on—
Enough, enough for me !

THE CALL OF THE MOUNTAINS.

JULY, 1910.

Oh ! my heart is dead on the plainland and deaf to
the drowsy singing

Of the still slow streams that wander where the
fields lie warm and wide—

For the voice of the wind hath whispers of hills
where the mists are clinging,

And the white fall leaps in laughter from the wild,
wet mountain side !

Oh ! sweet are the morning meadows and the clear,
bright moorland spaces,

And the warm world sunlit sleeping beneath the
golden noon—

But mine is the silent splendour of the rain-swept
desert places,

Of the mountains' deathless wonder, and the
winds' eternal tune !

Ah ! the Southland fields may fold me, and the
Southland breezes sighing

Through dreams to quiet waters, may soothe me
soft and low.

But swift on the wings of the morning my soul is
Northward flying,

For I hear the mountains calling and my heart
must break or—go.

THE MILLWHEEL.

AUGUST 21, 1910.

Flashing millwheel, turning, ever turning,
Waters brown that wander singing night and
day !

Swiftly to the sunlight leap the white drops,
burning

Outward into beauty, upward into spray.

Flashing millwheel, singing, ever singing,
To the waves that whisper of their woodland
home !

Borne aloft, their laughter, to your bright breast
clinging,

Echoes into music, flutters into foam.

Flashing millwheel, gleaming, ever gleaming !
Swift above their slumber, swept you to
destroy—

Bent and caught the waters from their woodland
dreaming,

Bent and caught and kissed and flung them forth
to joy !

Flashing millwheel, turning, ever turning !
In my heart dark waters strangely ebb and
flow—

Passions deep a-tremble, and the tides of yearning
Set from love's far ocean, fierce as long ago.

Flashing millwheel, glowing, ever glowing,
Golden through the glory of my golden dream !
Could but love's loud waters, from my faint heart
 flowing,
Sink at last to silence in your sunlit stream.

Flashing millwheel, sweeping, ever sweeping !
Kiss my heart's wild waters sweetly as your
 own—
Catch them, kiss them, fling them upward from
 their weeping—
Spray to float where yearning dies before Love's
 throne !

THE TWILIGHT LAND.

1910.

"That good and sweet affection which thou sometimes feelest, is the effect of Grace present and a sort of fore-taste of thy native land of Heaven."

THOMAS A KEMPIS.

PROLOGUE.

How the wind moans !

The shadows leap and dance
About my head, now stretching giant arms
To crush me down, and plunge me in a gloom
Of quivering shapes and sinuous hands that glide
Along the dim, dark walls ; then, swooping, fold
Swift serpent fingers o'er mine eyes.

The fire
Dies flickering down and the red embers fall.

How the wind moans !

The leafless branches lash
The shivering panes, and slow, sure, pitiless,
On the wan, winter world patters the rain.
Was it a dream—ah God !—only a dream?

Through folds of deadening darkness all my soul
Cries out, cries ever—ever ! yet still in vain.
Vain ! and the demon shadows shiver and shake
With peals of shuddering laughter, and the rain
Sobs on !

Ah ! golden glory of my dream !
 White wonder of the waiting world's desire !
 I call to thee. The shadows crush my heart.
 I am a wanderer in the twilight land,
 Poor pilgrim on the perfect path that leads
 To that white throne where sleeps the Soul's
 Desire !

Guide thou my feet. 'Tis dark. I have but seen
 One dawning smile upon the perfect lips !
 One wakening glory of the perfect eyes !
 One lightning splendour of the perfect face !

Was it a dream—ah God !—only a dream?
 My faith grows faint—lost, lost, as soon as seen—
 And in the gloom a voice ; and in that voice
 Doubt, disbelief, despair. Was it all a lie,
 A lie? My heart grows cold. Was it false then?

No !

No ! all my soul thrills—true—true—true !

My God !

If 'tis a lie then, all the world is lies,
 And Heaven a lie, and God's sweet faith a lie,
 And Death the end of all !

Yea, true !

For lo !

The voice of Her who stilled my soul of old,
 Low from the valleys of the twilight land
 Makes music 'mid the shadows—

“ Child of earth !

I am the spirit of the World's Desire.
 For me the world was made, and still through me
 Gropes its dark way to meet the perfect light
 Of God. In itself the world is dark. But life
 Is the light of the world. Love is the light of life.
 And life and love together look to me
 To mould for all mankind the perfect dream.
 I am the World's Ideal !”

And my arms
 Stretched out to clasp. I fell. And the black
 night
 Shut out her face.

Truth, yet a dream ! Can a dream
 Ever be true? 'Tis dark.

How the wind moans !
 Why will these dead doubts haunt my thoughts
 to-night?

Doubts I deemed crushed beneath the weight of
 years

Of perfect understanding. I would sleep.
 But horror broods above me, and I stand
 Dim in the graveyard of forgotten things.
 The low white tombs gape open at my feet
 And from the crumbling earth old ghosts arise.
 Old fears, old griefs, old longings for the flash,
 Half seen, yet vanishing, of an angel's wings.
 I see the quivering arms of dead desires

Writhe upwards from the grave to drag me down,
 To their soul-deadening darkness : in mine ears
 Hiss tongues of serpent slander, and Despair
 Lays her sad head to sleep upon my heart.
 Ah myriad mocking shadows, laugh on ! laugh on !
 All my wild soul laughs with you. Laugh ! for I,
 Dreamer of dreams, wanderer in twilight lands,
 I, who for one majestic moment deemed
 My soul above the souls of lesser men,
 Lie in the dust, bowed down with querulous fears
 That lesser men would scoff at.

I would sleep !

Oh ! I am weary of this ceaseless strife
 Of soul against the doubts that rack mankind.
 And as before, one evening long ago,
 One evening such as this, I whispered on
 Low to myself the story of my dream,
 Until perforce my tired heart, when slow
 And solemn from my lips the sweet words fell
 Of Her who sits upon the snow-white throne,
 Believed again, and sighed, and slept in peace ;
 So now again, in this mine anguish, I
 Will whisper to the darkness all the joy
 And wonder of my dream, and so perchance
 When all is finished, my sad soul shall rest !

Book I.

God's hour is in the twilight.

So I dreamed

One evening, leaning from the scented height
Of sun-flushed casements, where the roses swayed
In tremulous, clinging sprays of white and gold,
Beneath me in the stillness.

Thus I wove

Strange fantasies, and dreamed, with half a smile
At my hushed heart's enchantment, magic dreams
Of how, when making of the world was done,
God rested on His golden throne and gazed
Across the hills of time, to where afar
Moved the dim pageant of the years to be ;
Then murmured softly, " This My work is good.
Yet, in that long Hereafter, shall there come
A time when men no longer seek My Face.
Then shall they seek strange gods, and madly
strive,
Through mists of sin, to the dark end of all."
And so in pity He breathed on every soul
The breath of longing for those higher things
That lead us back to His high throne at last.
And then again He murmured " I have given
One day for rest and worshipping of Me.
Now will I grant that every day that wakes,
At touch of angels' fingers, o'er the earth

Shall have its little hour of prayer and praise ;
 So shall man reach, through prayer, to Heaven at
 last."

And so God gave the twilight. In that hour,
 At the dim gateways of the sunset, Day
 Kisses her sister Night, and side by side
 They lift together suppliant hands in prayer
 To Him Who is the King : and the low earth
 Lies faintly breathing in a silver sleep,
 Till far in Heaven the angel whispers die,
 And silent, slow, God's benediction falls,
 Through the blue veils of twilight, to the world.

Thus 'twas I dreamed, while the slow roses
 swayed

And little breezes whispered past my cheek,
 Whispered and wept and died : a nightingale
 Sang, till the night boughs trembled at her song,
 And sobbed themselves to sleep. The daylight
 died,

Grey-green and tender, o'er the distant fields,
 And o'er the dreaming tree-tops sweetly swept
 The slender sickle of the maiden moon.
 God's hour is in the twilight.

In my soul

A faint far-yearning woke, and cried, and caught
 At my hushed heart with clinging baby hands.
 And then the light clasp tightened, and sure and
 slow,
 Swelling and deepening, as an ocean wave

Ere it shall break in thunder, pitiless,
 Forth in my soul there burst a surging sea
 Of passionate longing, till my labouring heart
 Leapt to my throat, my breath died, and the world
 Flashed in my eyes, with myriad fiery sparks
 Of flickering flame, as though the winking stars
 Had fallen from Heaven to crush me down : my
 arms

Shot outward, upward, tingling, suppliant, vain
 Appealing. Then the veil fell from my eyes :
 My soul was silent and my heart was cold ;
 Those suppliant hands fell slow and in my eyes
 The roses glimmered through a mist of tears.
 Gone ! Gathered into the grave of dead sweet
 things !

My moment's mad, sweet yearning ! Can it be?
 Gone, when but now the breath of so much joy
 That still my faint heart trembles, shook my soul
 To the inmost depths. O sudden, swift delight,
 Vanished as soon as seen ! What art thou ? Say !
 Speak to me, answer me ! will there be ever a time
 That I may have thee for mine own ? Ah sweet,
 Sweet hour, thou fliest so fast. Is it that God
 Thus slowly draws us nearer ? Can it be
 A flash of that Ideal of which I dreamed,
 Whose self is life made perfect ?

If 'tis so,

Take me—for I am weary—Spirit of Love

Oh ! take me with thee to the twilight land,
That I may look upon the World's Desire.

A silence fell. The roses slept, and night
Frowned o'er the mists of pearl.

And then a voice
Stole to my ears, so soft, so sweet, I dreamed
'Twas but the sighing of the sad night-wind
Above me, then it deepened and a hand
Crept o'er my own, and, pressed against my
cheek,

Lay shadowy lips of one whose starry eyes
Drew out my soul, and all her streaming hair
Sighed out behind her to the stars, and so
Melted in moonlight. So her voice again
Breathed in the silence : " I have heard thy prayer.
I am a shadow from the twilight land,
Sent from the throne of Her whom here on earth
Men know but in their dreams. Thou hast thy
choice.

Choose ! Wilt thou sorrow still for fleeting joys
Thou understandest not, or wilt thou be
A wanderer within the twilight land,
Poor pilgrim on the perfect path that leads
To that white throne on high?"

And, gazing still
Into her eyes, I answered, trembling, " I
Would be a wanderer in the twilight land."

And as I spake the star eyes drew me down,
The shadowy lips pressed closer, and the air
Was filled with floating fragrance, e'en as though
The breath of all the roses in the world
Stole upward to my brain, and through a mist
Of moonlit glory still the starry eyes
Shone ever, till my tired heart slipped away
Into an utter silence, and a voice
Murmured through mists of dreamland, "It is
well,
Pass, child of Earth, to seek the Soul's Desire."

(Unfinished.)

GRASMERE.

1910.

The hills grew dark above me, as I stood
 Dreaming. Around me breathed the drowsy
 sweep
 Of winds that lulled the twilight of the wood
 To sleep.

White waves flung back the sunset : one fair star
 Flashed ; and the magic mountains silent lay
 And hushed, till Night's low voice made music far
 Away.

Then as Day's lips at parting kissed to birth
 The darkness, all the world thrilled in a sigh ;
 And lo ! new wonder stole across the earth
 And sky.

The woods slept purple-shadowed ; half awake,
 Leaves whispered ; white stars laughed from hill to
 hill :
 Light shone in silver splendour where the lake
 Lay still.

Was it a dream? By woodland ways he strayed—
Some spirit angel, tender-eyed and sweet,
Moving in mists of twilight. Then he stayed
His feet

Lightly : and lifted to my lips the cup
Of Beauty, till my soul's dazed footsteps trod
Heavenward ; and something in my heart rose up
To God.

EVENING AT THE FERRY, WINDERMERE.

1910.

Wild grasses whisper, and the woodlands fall
 To the lake's brink—beautiful ! The mystery
 Of mountains sleeping mist-majestical
 Grows dim. But here the grey waves sing to me,
 Waves from afar, where distance dies and all
 The hills slope softly to the western sea.

The winds hang silent, hearkening to the sweep
 Of Night's slow fingers o'er the silver lyre
 Of slumber—music that the mountains keep
 For ever : and agleam with tremulous fire
 Far off the white lake waters fade in sleep
 To that dream-land where dwells my heart's
 desire.

My heart's desire? Oh ! whisper in mine ears,
 Lake waters, shall I know that dear delight,
 Too deep for laughter and too sweet for tears?
 Oh if love's pity lead thee to my sight,
 Drawn slowly towards me through the vanished
 years,
 'Twill be in such an hour as this to-night !

An hour to dream beneath a tender sky,
 When lights are golden, and the long lake shines
 About the twilit isles of mystery,
 Or pause where tired winds haunt their woodland
 shrines,
 To hear the waves' low-whispered lullaby,
 And catch the message of the sunset pines.

Oh, there are dreams whose splendour cannot die !
 Dreams when life's loveliness has burst the bars
 That bind the soul, and it may upward fly,
 Mounting awhile above the mist that mars
 God's earth—yea, soaring, seek His Heaven on
 high,
 And wander lonely, singing to the stars.

To-night high yearning touched me by the hand,
 Burst through the bars, and swept my soul away ;
 And I in spirit have trod to that dream-land,
 And known that joy beyond what lips can say,
 Or hope can dream, or heart can understand ;
 Joy that shall live until God's Judgment Day !

I have trod upward through the gates of gold
 To valleys where the voice of yearning thrills
 Grey woodlands ; and the flowers of faith unfold.
 Yea, learnt at last the ancient grief that fills
 The sea, and secrets that the winds of old
 Sang ever sadly to the silent hills.

Lo ! I have stood where night's dark angels meet
Above the music of the midnight sea,
And all my soul's far journeyings have been
sweet ;

And all things fair have gracious been to me ;
For Beauty trod the path before my feet,
And Love, even Love, has borne me company ;

Love, the bright bird that in life's morning sings,
And sweet at even, loveless souls to save ;
Love lighting darkness with his silver wings,
The last best gift our guardian angels gave ;
Love that alone, I think, of earthly things
Lives on to gladden us beyond the grave.

TO AMARYLLIS.

1910.

Oh who would be, Oh who would be
A shepherd boy in Arcady?
Clear piping where the hilltops dream
And lightly laughs the mountain stream,
Or stretched along the gleaming grass
To watch the grey cloud-shadows pass,
And not a care the livelong day
From dawn of gold to twilight grey.
Oh I would be, Oh I would be
A shepherd boy in Arcady.

Oh who would be, Oh who would be
A shepherd maid in Arcady?
To tend the flocks and softly sing
By woodland waters wandering :
Or garlands weave of woodland flowers
To crown her in the moonlit hours,
When from the sleeping hills above
Dance feet that she has learnt to love.
Oh thou should'st be, Oh thou should'st be
A shepherd maid in Arcady.

Oh who would see, Oh who would see
 The golden vales of Arcady?
 Some seek that lovely land in vain,
 And some the fields of gladness gain :
 Yet grief there is, though love be sweet,
 And many a mile for weary feet :
 And Death to dim life's Paradise,
 And cloud with tears, until our eyes
 Shall never see, shall never see
 Dream-haunted hills in Arcady.

Yet it may be, yet it may be
 We, too, shall come to Arcady !
 Some say the gods are dead : but still
 They dream, I think, by vale and hill
 In that bright land. And love it seems
 Dies not, but lives in all our dreams.
 So we in Sleep's dim wonderland
 May meet and wander hand in hand,
 Until we see, until we see
 Love light the vales of Arcady.

THE GARDEN.

OCTOBER 23, 1910.

I know a quiet garden
Where April violets blow,
Where daffodils are golden,
And blossoms burst in snow,
Where summer brings her roses,
And lilacs laugh in May,
While chestnut boughs are lighting
Their lamps along the way ;
Paths where the lips of Autumn
Have kissed the leaves to gold,
And Christmas roses brighten
In dim December's cold ;
When sweetly sings the robin
On leafless boughs above,
Ere the chill wind wake the twilight
In the garden that I love.

Oh ! the dawn and oh ! the sunset
 In the garden that I love !
 When still the flowers are dreaming
 And little breezes move,
 And sing to sleepy shadows
 Over the grasses drawn,
 Where the clear-voiced thrush is calling
 From the laurels o'er the lawn ;
 When shadows grey come creeping
 Out of the western sky,
 When the fairies wake and wander
 And the garden whispers die,
 And the first star leaps to beauty
 In a splendour far away,
 That glows o'er fields far golden
 At closing of the day.

Oh the echoes and the voices
 In the garden that I love !
 For from flower and lawn and pathway,
 Grass below and boughs above,
 Comes the sound of childish voices
 That are trembling down the years,
 And that wake my lips to laughter
 While they dim my eyes with tears.

Oh ! they thrill my heart with longing
And they pierce my heart with pain
For the little childish voices
That shall never sound again,
For the garden and the pathways
That are listening as of yore,
For the little laughing footsteps
That shall come again no more.

But childish feet still echo
Beneath the fir-trees tall,
Along the fence that wanders
To meet the garden wall.
The tool-shed roof has voices,
And yet the ivy clings
Where childish lips have whispered
Of far-off childish things.
The apple tree ; our gardens ;
The wonder of the dell ;
Mirabelles white that shadow
The pit we loved so well.
All have their whispered voices
That call me soft and low
In the garden, loved as ever
I loved it long ago.

Gone are the childish voices
And fled the childish feet ;
Yet still the paths are golden,
And still the lawns are sweet.
If ever the way be weary,
If ever my heart be sad,
There are thoughts to banish sorrow :
There are dreams to make me glad :
Fair dreams of a quiet garden
Where slow the walnut sways,
Dear dreams of the tender faces
That haunt those garden ways.
Oh ! I pray that when all is ended
I may leave that land above
Sometimes to walk through the twilight
In the garden that I love !



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